

Addressing #SaveOurChildren, Explaining Child Sex Trafficking

In the past several weeks, child sex trafficking has become a hot topic on social media and online forums leading to an increase in public concern about the issue. Common posts and discussions include but are not limited to viral stories about complex human trafficking operations involving well known political figures, celebrities and retailers.

Polaris is deeply concerned that these unproven online stories have had a negative impact on the work of fighting trafficking and keeping children safe being undertaken every day by trusted organizations, service providers, governments and law enforcement agencies.

Below please find:

- Talking points we are using to respond to inquiries from media, supporters and our online community as appropriate.
- Sample social media posts for Twitter, Facebook and Instagram based on the talking points.
- Link to downloadable shareables for social media to provide more, better information about child sex trafficking.
- Link to blog post that summarizes other sources of credible information.

Feel free to replace the Polaris child trafficking web page with another credible source.

We hope this material is helpful as you navigate this challenging period. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions or other suggestions for ways we can support your organization and work together to provide credible information about this very real problem.

- **Sample Facebook/Instagram Post:** There have been a number of viral stories spreading online about #childtrafficking. In order to be better equipped to keep your own children safe and become an effective advocate for the safety of all children in your community, please visit <https://polarisproject.org/child-sex-trafficking/> to learn more about this complex issue and understand the norms and realities of #childsextrafficking
- **Twitter:** With viral stories about #childtrafficking spreading, learn more about how this crime really happens so you can help keep your children safe & effectively advocate for the safety of all children in your community. See polarisproject.org/childtrafficking

What You Should Know

Contact information for the National Human Trafficking Hotline is public and sharing it does not imply affiliation: The National Trafficking Hotline (Trafficking Hotline) is operated by

Polaris, a nonprofit organization. Polaris does not approve the posting or sharing of information about how to contact the Trafficking Hotline. In other words, just because the Trafficking Hotline information appears on a social media post, a poster, or anywhere else, does not imply affiliation with or approval by the Trafficking Hotline, or by Polaris.

- **Sample Facebook/Instagram Post:** The National Human Trafficking Hotline is operated by Polaris. The Trafficking Hotline's contact information is public, and the appearance of the Trafficking Hotline's information anywhere does not imply affiliation with or approval by the Trafficking Hotline, or Polaris, a nonprofit that operates the Trafficking Hotline.
- **Twitter:** The National Human Trafficking Hotline's contact info is public. If the Trafficking Hotline's info appears anywhere, it does not imply affiliation with or approval by the Trafficking Hotline, or by Polaris, the nonprofit that operates the Hotline..

The National Human Trafficking Hotline takes every contact seriously: The Trafficking Hotline connects victims and survivors to help and support around the country. This could mean assistance finding a safe place to stay, a ride, or a trauma counselor or attorney, for example. The Trafficking Hotline also takes reports from members of the public who believe they may have firsthand or unique information about a trafficking situation. Every tip shared with the Trafficking Hotline is taken seriously and acted upon accordingly. The Trafficking Hotline does not investigate tips and cannot verify the accuracy of information shared with us. The role of the Trafficking Hotline is to provide a single point of entry for those seeking assistance and to share information and reports, as necessary and appropriate, with partner organizations including law enforcement in some cases.

- **Sample Facebook/Instagram Post:** The National Human Trafficking Hotline connects victims and survivors to help and takes tips about potential trafficking situations. The Hotline doesn't investigate tips. The Hotline shares the information with appropriate investigative agencies as warranted. All reports are taken seriously and handled with care. That's why we ask the public to think carefully about whether they have firsthand or unique information to share.
- **Twitter:** The Trafficking Hotline takes tips about potential trafficking & connects victims and survivors with help. The Hotline doesn't investigate tips. The tips that really help are from people with firsthand knowledge of a situation.

Abduction or kidnapping into sex trafficking situations are extremely rare: Children virtually always know and trust the person who trafficks them. Most commonly, children are trafficked by members of their own families, or by people they have developed relationships with, online or in person, and believe to be their friends, romantic partners or benefactors.

- **Sample Facebook/Instagram Post:** Children are most commonly trafficked by members of their own families or people they have developed close relationships with, such as friends or romantic partners. Learn more: <https://polarisproject.org/childtrafficking>; #childsextrafficking
- **Twitter:** Most often, children are trafficked by members of their own families or people they have developed close relationships with, such as friends or romantic partners. Learn more: polarisproject.org/childtrafficking #childsextrafficking

Not all missing children are sex trafficking victims, but runaway children are at greater risk than other children for sex and labor trafficking: Statistics and data about missing children in particular should not be confused as the number of children being victimized in sex trafficking situations.

- **Sample Facebook/Instagram Post:** Not all missing children are sex trafficking victims, but runaway children are at greater risk than other children for sex and labor trafficking. In 2018, an estimated 1 out of 7 endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children were likely child sex trafficking victims. Statistics and data about missing children in particular should not be confused as the number of children being victimized in sex trafficking situations. [n](#)
- **Twitter:** Not all missing children are sex trafficking victims, but runaway children are at greater risk. Statistics about missing children should not be confused as the number of children being victimized in sex trafficking situations.

What You Should Do

Call the Trafficking Hotline if you have firsthand information beyond what is publicly available: If you have actual personal knowledge of a situation or individual that concerns you that is not publicly available through other sources, the Trafficking Hotline can help ensure that information is acted upon as quickly and effectively as possible. Please be mindful that a flood of secondhand information may lead to longer wait times for victims and survivors who need immediate assistance for their own safety.

- **Sample Facebook/Instagram Post:** Call the National Human Trafficking Hotline if you have any firsthand knowledge about a situation of trafficking that is not publicly available through other sources. A flood of reports with secondhand information may lead to longer wait times for victims and survivors in need of immediate assistance.

- **Twitter:** Call the Trafficking Hotline if you have info about a trafficking situation not publicly available through other sources. A flood of secondhand reports leads to longer wait times for victims & survivors in need of immediate help.

Consider the source of information you receive: Child sex trafficking is real and there are many organizations and government agencies who have been working to fight it for years. A good place to start is the [Office on Trafficking in Persons in the U.S. Administration for Children and Families](#).

- **Sample Facebook/Instagram Post:** If you are looking to learn more about what we know about #childtrafficking, please visit <https://polarisproject.org/child-sex-trafficking/> and refer to the [Office on Trafficking in Persons in the U.S. Administration for Children and Families](#) for a list of organizations and government agencies who have been working in the field for years and are verified sources of information. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip>
- **Twitter:** To learn more about #childtrafficking, please visit polarisproject.org/childtrafficking & or see the U.S. Office on Trafficking in Persons/Administration for Children & Families for a list of expert orgs and agencies <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip>;

Share credible information with your community: Understanding the realities of child sex trafficking will help you to not only keep your own children safe, but to become an effective advocate for the safety of all children and families in your community. Here's some information you can share.

Child Sex Trafficking Webpage: <https://polarisproject.org/child-sex-trafficking/>

What We Know About How Child Sex Trafficking Happens

<https://polarisproject.org/blog/2020/08/what-we-know-about-how-child-sex-trafficking-happens/>

How Unproven Trafficking Stories Spread Online and Why Stopping Them Matters

<https://polarisproject.org/blog/2020/07/how-unproven-trafficking-stories-spread-online-and-why-stopping-them-matters/>

Instagram Story Highlight: ChildTrafficking <https://www.instagram.com/polarisproject/>

Shareable Social Media Graphics (Also available for download on the Child Sex Trafficking Webpage listed above.)

Child sex trafficking victims virtually always know their traffickers.

Learn the facts at polarisproject.org/childtrafficking.

Most often, children are lured into sex trafficking by people they trust, not by strangers.

Learn the facts at polarisproject.org/childtrafficking.

Sex traffickers usually groom or seduce children into commercial sex, rarely do they kidnap them.

Learn the facts at polarisproject.org/childtrafficking.

Worried about child sex trafficking? Kidnapping is not the norm. Online recruitment and grooming is.

Learn the facts at polarisproject.org/childtrafficking.

Children are far more likely to be trafficked by someone the child already knows and trusts than strangers.

Learn the facts at polarisproject.org/childtrafficking.

Child sex trafficking happens like this.

Learn the facts at polarisproject.org/childtrafficking.

Not like this.

Learn the facts at polarisproject.org/childtrafficking.

Sample Twitter Thread:

1. With a number of viral stories spreading about #childtrafficking, it is vital to better understand the norms of child sex trafficking to help keep your own children safe & become an effective advocate for the safety of all children in your community.
 2. First, it's important to view all claims about how much child sex trafficking is happening with skepticism, as there is no definitive data on prevalence. The National Human Trafficking Hotline's statistics are based only on situations that the Hotline learns about.
- 2/8

3. Although runaway children are at greater risk for trafficking, not all missing children are victims of sex trafficking. Statistics about missing children should not be confused with the number of children being victimized in sex trafficking situations. 3/8
4. What we do know is that children are most commonly trafficked by members of their own families or people they have developed close relationships with, such as friends or romantic partners. 4/8
5. Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline if you have first-hand knowledge about a trafficking situation. The Trafficking Hotline takes reports seriously. However, the Trafficking Hotline does not conduct investigations and cannot verify the accuracy of a situation. 5/8
6. A flood of reports with second-hand information that is publicly available through social media, news reports, or other sources may lead to longer wait times for victims and survivors in need of immediate assistance. 6/8
7. Child sex trafficking is real and there are many organizations and government agencies who have been working to fight it for years. 7/8
8. To learn more about #childtrafficking, please visit polarisproject.org/childtrafficking or refer to the Office on Trafficking in Persons in the U.S. Administration for Children and Families for a list of orgs and gov't agencies who are experts in the field <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip>. 8/8